United Nations S/2014/287

Security Council

Distr.: General
17 April 2014

Original: English

Letter dated 17 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to write to transmit to you a letter from the representative of the Syrian Coalition dated 17 April 2014 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you could have this and the accompanying letter from the Syrian Coalition circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mark **Lyall Grant**

14-30429 (E) 220414

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 17 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, it is my grave responsibility to draw to your attention the Syrian regime's brutal assault on the city of Homs and the urgent need for the Security Council to take immediate steps to stop the death and destruction currently under way in Syria.

As the Joint Special Representative for Syria remarked this morning, Homs has once again become a "theatre of death and destruction". Earlier this week, Syrian armed forces backed by pro-regime militia entered the central city of Homs to resume and complete a deadly two-year siege. In direct violation of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), Syrian armed forces bombarded neighbourhoods throughout the Old City, deploying aerial weapons in brazen disregard of their civilian inhabitants. At present, hundreds of Syrians remain trapped inside the city confines, awaiting what is almost certain death by a regime that has no concern for the lives of its people.

The Syrian regime's brutal siege of Homs represents a direct violation of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), in which members of the Council unanimously demanded that the Syrian regime "immediately lift the sieges of populated areas, including in the Old City of Homs (Homs)". The Security Council must act urgently to follow through on its stated "intent to take further steps in the case of non-compliance", as stipulated in paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014). Without immediate action by the Security Council to stop the slaughter in Homs, hundreds of innocent lives will be lost. The people of Homs urgently appeal to the Council to take concrete measures to protect the people of Syria. We urge the Council to take the following steps:

(a) Send a clear message to the regime that failure to cease its deadly offensives immediately will result in swift and decisive Chapter VII measures. Given the urgency of the situation, this warning needs to be agreed and adopted by the Council today;

(b) Should the regime fail to comply with the Council's request, the Council should meet again tomorrow to agree upon and adopt a Chapter VII resolution imposing wide-ranging sanctions on the regime and threatening further steps if the situation continues;

(c) Mandate with immediate effect the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need without discrimination and without the consent of the regime. The regime's policy of arbitrary denial of access and its determination to significantly worsen rather than improve the humanitarian situation make such a move not only necessary but obligatory. The legal justification for delivery without consent in any case exists. But a Council mandate would nevertheless send a strong signal to the regime; and

(d) Refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. The lack of accountability and consequences for heinous crimes only makes the escalation of such crimes more likely.

It saddens me to write that the failure of the Security Council to use its considerable collective weight thus far has certainly cost many innocent Syrian lives, allowed a humanitarian catastrophe to unfold, and threatened regional and international security. Taking the steps above gives a chance to de-escalate the situation and open up the space for a negotiated solution. It should not be incumbent upon us to lay these steps out for you. This has been the business of the Security Council since its inception. We urge you to fulfil your responsibilities. Save lives. Protect innocent civilians. Encourage peace and security. The alternative is to condemn the Security Council to serve as a mere spectator of horror, destruction, the death of a nation and the chaos of a region.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative of the Syrian Coalition
to the United Nations